

WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:

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1. A transmitter card for a personal computer, comprising:
 - (a) a circuit board which plugs into the personal computer and which is coupled to exchange data via an industry-standard bus in the personal computer; and
 - (b) radio frequency modulation circuitry on the circuit board, which receives the data and transmits radio frequency signals responsive thereto.
2. A card according to claim 1, wherein the circuitry comprises a frequency synthesizer generating the radio frequency signals.
3. A card according to claim 2, wherein the frequency generated by the frequency synthesizer is set by a controller on the circuit board.
4. A card according to claim 2, wherein the frequency generated by the frequency synthesizer is set by conveying instructions via the computer bus.
5. A card according to claim 1, wherein the card is coupled to an external antenna system, and comprising a connector, through which a DC source external to the card powers the antenna system.

6. A card according to claim 5, wherein the frequency modulation circuitry is coupled to convey the radio frequency signals to the antenna system via the connector.

7. A card according to claim 1, wherein the modulation circuitry modulates the transmitted signals according to a predefined protocol in accordance with a command conveyed to the card via the industry-standard bus.

8. A card according to claim 1, wherein the modulation circuitry comprises an encoder which encodes error correction into the transmitted signals according to a predefined protocol in accordance with a command conveyed to the card via the industry-standard bus.

9. A card according to claim 1, and comprising an auxiliary connector through which the card is coupled to at least one other card located in the computer, such that signals pass between the cards without passing through the industry-standard bus.

10. A card according to claim 1, wherein the signals are transmitted to a satellite.

11. A radio frequency (RF) communication card for a personal computer, comprising:

- (a) a circuit board which plugs into the personal computer and which is coupled to exchange data via an industry-standard bus in the personal computer;
- (b) RF circuitry on the circuit board, which receives the data and processes RF signals responsive thereto; and
- (c) an auxiliary connector through which the card is coupled to at least one other card located in the computer, such that signals pass between the cards without passing through the industry-standard bus.

12. A card according to claim 11, wherein the communication card conveys a synchronizing signal via the auxiliary connector.

13. A satellite transceiver for a personal computer, comprising:

- (a) a transmitter card which plug's into the personal computer and which is coupled to exchange data via an industry-standard bus in the personal computer and which transmits radio frequency signals responsive to the received data;
- (b) a receiver card which plugs into the personal computer and which is coupled to transfer data via the industry-standard bus and which receives radio frequency signals and converts the received signals to data for transfer via the bus; and
- (c) an auxiliary bus directly connecting the transmitter card and the receiver card.

14. A transceiver according to claim 13, wherein the transmitter card and the receiver card comprise respective connectors coupling the cards to the auxiliary bus.

15. A method for transmitting a radio frequency signal directly from a personal computer, comprising:

- (a) mounting a transmitter card in the personal computer;
- (b) conveying data to the card via an industry-standard computer bus in the personal computer; and
- (c) transmitting the radio frequency signal from the card responsive to the data.

16. A method according to claim 15, wherein conveying data to the card comprises determining a frequency band of the signal.

17. A method according to claim 15, and comprising: mounting a power connector on the card; and powering an antenna system external to the card via the power connector.

18. A method according to claim 15, wherein transmitting the radio frequency signal comprises modulating the signal in accordance with a modulation scheme determined responsive to a command conveyed via the bus.

19. A method according to claim 15, wherein transmitting the radio frequency signal comprises encoding an error correction onto the signal in accordance with an encoding scheme determined responsive to a command conveyed via the bus.

20. A method according to claim 15, and comprising connecting the transmitter card to at least one other card via an auxiliary connector, such that signals pass between the cards without passing through the industry-standard bus.

21. A method according to claim 15, wherein transmitting the signal comprises transmitting the signal to a satellite.

22. A method for transmitting and receiving signals between a satellite and a personal computer comprising:

- (a) coupling a transmitter card to an industry-standard bus in the computer;
- (b) transmitting radio frequency signals from the transmitter card responsive to data from the bus;
- (c) coupling a receiver card to the industry-standard bus;
- (d) receiving radio frequency signals in the receiver card responsive to data from the bus; and
- (e) coupling the transmitter and receiver cards together directly via an auxiliary bus separate from the industry-standard bus.

23. A method according to claim 22, wherein receiving radio frequency signals comprises conveying a synchronizing signal from the receiver card to the transmitter card via the auxiliary bus.